



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/060,066	01/29/2002	Alejandro Abuin	LEX-0304-USA	8417

7590 02/25/2003

Lance K. Ishimoto
Lexicon Genetics Incorporated
4000 Research Forest Drive
The Woodlands, TX 77381

EXAMINER

BERTOGLIO, VALARIE E

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1632

DATE MAILED: 02/25/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/060,066

Applicant(s)

ABUIN ET AL.

Examiner

Valarie Bertoglio

Art Unit

1632

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 January 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Applicants' amendment, filed 01/13/03, Paper No. 7, has been entered. Claims 1-7 have been cancelled. Claims 1-7 have been amended and claim 8 has been cancelled. Claims 1-7 are pending and under current examination.

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of Group I as it relates to SEQ ID NO:2 in Paper No. 7 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §101 & 112

Definitions:

[from REVISED INTERIM UTILITY GUIDELINES TRAINING MATERIALS; repeated from <http://www.uspto.gov/web/menu/utility.pdf>]

"Credible Utility" - Where an applicant has specifically asserted that an invention has a particular utility, that assertion cannot simply be dismissed by Office personnel as being "wrong". Rather, Office personnel must determine if the assertion of utility is credible (i.e., whether the assertion of utility is believable to a person of ordinary skill in the art based on the totality of evidence and reasoning provided). An assertion is credible unless (A) the logic underlying the assertion is seriously flawed, or (B) the facts upon which the assertion is based is inconsistent with the logic underlying the assertion. Credibility as used in this context refers to the reliability of the statement based on the logic and facts that are offered by the applicant to support the assertion of utility. A *credible* utility is assessed from the standpoint of whether a person of ordinary skill in the art would accept that the recited or disclosed invention is currently available for such use. For example, no perpetual motion machines would be considered to be currently available. However, nucleic acids could be used as probes, chromosome markers, or forensic or diagnostic markers. Therefore, the credibility of such an assertion would not be questioned, although such a use might fail the *specific* and *substantial* tests (see below).

"Specific Utility" - A utility that is *specific* to the subject matter claimed. This contrasts with a *general* utility that would be applicable to the broad class of the invention. For example, a claim to a polynucleotide whose use is disclosed simply as a "gene probe" or "chromosome marker" would not be considered to be *specific* in the absence of a disclosure of a specific DNA target. Similarly, a general statement of diagnostic utility, such as diagnosing an unspecified disease, would ordinarily be insufficient absent a disclosure of what condition can be diagnosed.

"Substantial utility" - a utility that defines a "real world" use. Utilities that require or constitute carrying out further research to identify or reasonably confirm a "real world" context of use are not substantial utilities. For example, both a therapeutic method of treating a known or newly discovered disease and an assay method for identifying compounds that themselves have a "substantial utility" define a "real world" context of

Art Unit: 1632

use. An assay that measures the presence of a material which has a stated correlation to a predisposition to the onset of a particular disease condition would also define a "real world" context of use in identifying potential candidates for preventive measures or further monitoring. On the other hand, the following are examples of situations that require or constitute carrying out further research to identify or reasonably confirm a "real world" context of use and, therefore, do not define "substantial utilities":

A. Basic research such as studying the properties of the claimed product itself or the mechanisms in which the material is involved.

B. A method of treating an unspecified disease or condition. (Note, this is in contrast to the general rule that treatments of specific diseases or conditions meet the criteria of 35 U.S.C. 101.)

C. A Method of assaying for or identifying a material that itself has no "specific and/or substantial utility".

D. A method of making a material that itself has no specific, substantial, and credible utility.

E. A claim to an intermediate product for use in making a final product that has no specific, substantial, and credible utility.

Note that "throw away" utilities do not meet the tests for a *specific* or *substantial* utility. For example, using transgenic mice as snake food is a utility that is neither specific (all mice could function as snake food) nor substantial (using a mouse costing tens of thousands of dollars to produce as snake food is not a "real world" context of use). Similarly, use of any protein as an animal food supplement or a shampoo ingredient are "throw away" utilities that would not pass muster as specific or substantial utilities under 35 U.S.C. 101. This analysis should, of course, be tempered by consideration of the context and nature of the invention. For example, if a transgenic mouse was generated with the specific provision of an enhanced nutrient profile, and disclosed for use as an animal food, then the test for specific and substantial *asserted* utility would be considered to be met.

"Well established utility" - a specific, substantial, and credible utility which is well known, immediately apparent, or implied by the specification's disclosure of the properties of a material, alone or taken with the knowledge of one skilled in the art. "Well established utility" does not encompass any "throw away" utility that one can dream up for an invention or a nonspecific utility that would apply to virtually every member of a general class of materials, such as proteins or DNA. If this is the case, any product or apparatus, including perpetual motion machines, would have a "well established utility" as landfill, an amusement device, a toy, or a paper weight; any carbon containing molecule would have a "well established utility" as a fuel since it can be burned; any protein would have well established utility as a protein supplement for animal food. This is not the intention of the statute.

See also the MPEP § 2107 - 2107.02.

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Art Unit: 1632

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention lacks patentable utility due to its not being not supported by either a specific and/or substantial utility or a well established utility.

The claimed genetically engineered mammalian cell lines which have been mutated by a process comprising the insertion of a recombinantly manipulated polynucleotide sequence into a gene, said gene corresponding to SEQ ID NO: 2, and isolated murine embryonic stem cell lines comprising an engineered retroviral gene trap vector in at least one gene comprising a polynucleotide sequence disclosed in SEQ ID NO: 2, are not supported by a specific asserted utility because the disclosed uses of the cell lines are not specific, and are generally applicable to any cell comprising any nucleic acid. The specification states that the cells may be useful in generating a transgenic animal [see page 6, lines 9-24], however, this is a non-specific use that is -applicable to any embryonic stem cell, and not particular nor specific to the embryonic stem cell being claimed.

Furthermore, the claimed cells and embryonic stem cell is not supported by a substantial utility because no substantial utility has been established for the claimed subject matter. For example, the stem cell could be used to generate a transgenic animal, and the resulting transgenic animal could be studied to see the effect of the introduced mutation. The need for such research clearly indicates that the claimed cell is not disclosed as to a currently available or substantial utility. A starting material that can only be used to produce a final product does not have substantial asserted utility in those instances where the final product is not supported by a specific and substantial utility. In the instant case, none of the cells or transgenic animals that are to be produced as final products have asserted or identified specific and substantial

Art Unit: 1632

utilities. Identifying and studying the properties of an embryonic stem cell or transgenic animal does not define a "real world" context or use. Note, because the claimed invention is not supported by a specific and substantial asserted utility for the reasons set forth above, credibility has not been assessed. Neither the specification as filed, nor any art of record discloses or suggests any property or activity for the claimed embryonic stem cells such that another non-asserted utility would be well established.

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-7 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. Specifically, since the claimed invention is not supported by either a specific or substantial asserted utility or a well established utility for the reasons set forth above, one skilled in the art clearly would not know how to use the claimed invention.

Note further, that with regard to claim 3, directed to a murine embryonic stem cell, the specification is not enabling for the claimed invention because the claims are directed to "murine" ES cells, which encompasses both totipotent and pluripotent stem cells. The term "murine" as defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary is, "of or relating to a murid genus or its subfamily which includes the common household rats and mice." However, the specification is not enabling for murine ES cells for the breadth claimed. This is because the state of the art is such that ES cell technology is generally limited to the mouse system at present, and that only "putative" ES cells exist for other species (see Moreadith *et al.*, J. Mol. Med., 1997, p. 214, *Summary*). Note that "putative" ES cells lack a demonstration of the cell to give rise to germline

Art Unit: 1632

tissue or the whole animal, a demonstration that is an art-recognized property of ES cells. Moreadith *et al.* supports this observation as they discuss the historical perspective of mouse ES cells as follows:

"The stage was set-one could grow normal, diploid ES cells in culture for multiple passages without loss of the ability to contribute to normal development. Furthermore, the cells contributed to the development of gametes at a high frequency (germline competence) and the haploid genomes of these cells were transmitted to the next generation. Thus, the introduction of mutations in these cells offered the possibility of producing mice with a predetermined genotype."

This is further supported by Pera *et al.* [2000, Journal of Cell Science, Vol. 113, pages 5-10] who present the generic criteria for pluripotent ES or EG cells [see p. 6, 2nd column] and state that, "Thus far, only mouse EG or ES cells meet these generic criteria. Primate ES cells meet the first three of the four criteria, but not the last. Numerous other candidate mammalian ES cells have been described over the years in domestic and laboratory species, but only in the mouse have all criteria been met rigorously." [See p. 6, 2nd column, last ¶]. The specification fails to provide teachings or guidance for any other ES cells other than from mice.

Accordingly, in view of the quantity of experimentation necessary to produce totipotent ES cells from species other than mouse, the undeveloped and unpredictable state of the ES cell art, as well as the lack of teachings or guidance provided by the specification for the production of any cells from species other than mouse, it would have required undue experimentation for one skilled in the art to make and/or use the claimed invention.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to

one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. This is a written description rejection.

Vas-Cath Inc. v. Mahurkar, 19USPQ2d 1111 (Fed. Cir. 1991), clearly states that “applicant must convey with reasonable clarity to those skilled in the art that, as of the filing date sought, he or she was in possession *of the invention*. The invention is, for purposes of the ‘written description’ inquiry, *whatever is now claimed*.” *Vas-Cath Inc. v. Mahurkar*, 19USPQ2d at 1117. The specification does not “clearly allow persons of ordinary skill in the art to recognize that [he or she] invented what is claimed. *Vas-Cath Inc. v. Mahurkar*, 19USPQ2d at 1116.

The claimed invention as a whole is not adequately described if the claims require essential or critical elements which are not adequately described in the specification and which are not conventional in the art **as of Applicants effective filing date**. Possession may be shown by actual reduction to practice, clear depiction of the invention in a detailed drawing, or by describing the invention with sufficient relevant identifying characteristics (as it relates to the claimed invention as a whole) such that a person skilled in the art would recognize that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention. *Pfaff v. Wells Electronics, Inc.*, 48 USPQ2d 1641, 1646 (1998). Adequate written description requires more than a mere statement that it is part of the invention and reference to a potential method of isolating it. See *Fiers v. Revel*, 25 USPQ2d 1601, 1606 (Fed. Cir. 1993) and *Amgen Inc. v. Chugai Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd.*, 18 USPQ2d 1016 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

The specification discloses that SEQ ID Nos: 1-248 correspond to murine cDNA sequences. As it is not apparent that SEQ ID NO: 2 is a complete cDNA sequence, the claims read on all cells that have a disruption of a gene which is encoded by an undescribed sequence. Given the multiplicity of sequences encompassed by SEQ ID NO: 2, the specification does not describe what the actual sequence Applicants’ cells or ES cell(s) possess, nor have they

Art Unit: 1632

identified the particular gene associated with those DNA fragments. One of ordinary skill in the art would not know what actual sequence was present in the ES cells produced by Applicant. Many, if not most, of the sequences encompassed may not be real sequences corresponding to real genes. The claims require that one of ordinary skill in the art produce murine ES cell lines, which comprise a disruption of a gene whose sequence may not exist in nature. The skilled artisan cannot envision the detailed chemical structures of all the sequences encompassed by the above noted SEQ ID No: 2.

One cannot describe what one has not conceived. See *Fiddes v. Baird*, 30 USPQ2d 1481, 1483. In *Fiddes*, claims directed to mammalian FGF's were found to be unpatentable due to lack of written description for that broad class. The specification provided only the bovine sequence.

Applicant is reminded that *Vas-Cath* makes clear that the written description provision of 35 U.S.C. §112 is severable from its enablement provision (see page 1115).

Conclusion

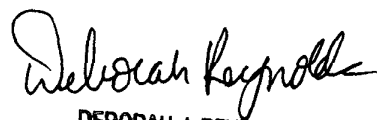
No claim is allowed.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Valarie Bertoglio whose telephone number is 703-305-5469. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Deborah Reynolds can be reached on 703-305-4051. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9306 for regular communications and 703-872-9307 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1234.

Valarie Bertoglio
Patent Examiner


DEBORAH J. REYNOLDS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1600